



Lodge Grass OPI Team - Planning for Improvement January, 2011

School improvement is not a mystery; effective instruction is the most important factor effecting positive learning outcomes. Improving instruction requires us first to carefully look at what we now do and what we should do in our classrooms. Do we have the heart to reverse the status quo? We must be willing to remove any barriers that prevent an honest assessment of our current practices and reorient our time and energy to common sense practices that will make a difference.

Instruction News---Angie Collins, Instructional Leader (IL): **Summary of December:** During the past month, I have provided professional development to K – 12 staff members regarding student engagement, individual lesson plan/unit development using Understanding by Design (a backward design process). All professional development administered to faculty is aligned to the components of the Schools of Promise Performance Appraisal System (SOPPAS) and preparing teachers for the evaluation process. Professional development sessions geared towards SOPPAS will continue throughout January. Outside program consultants have also been in the high school providing professional development in the areas of math and communication arts. Roy Shelton, a math coach for the National Training Network, returned to Lodge Grass to assist Algebraic Thinking and KEAS math teachers. Francis Bessellieu and Anne Ganzert of Side-by-Side Consulting made their initial visit to Lodge Grass in December. They will return in January to continue their efforts in providing professional development with Corrective Reading and Communication Arts teachers. Roy, Francis and Ann are supporting teachers, building administrators and OPI's efforts to implement new programs with fidelity. Since the last board meeting, I have completed six full coaching cycles and several classroom observations in all content areas. A stronger focus on instructional coaching will begin in January. I have also been aligning McDougal Littell (high school communication arts program) to state standards. Part of this process includes infusing Indian Education for All material into the Lodge Grass communication arts curriculum. I will continue coaching, observations and curriculum work throughout the school year.

Transformation News --- Corri Smith: Happy New Year! On Thursday, December 24th the entire Lodge Grass Public Schools staff was invited to celebrate school improvement work accomplished this semester. Punch, cake, and cupcakes were enjoyed by all in attendance. The staff was asked to write down a success, a few examples include:

- Student MBI was formed and is making an impact;
- Students returning to campus and to class;
- Elementary staff is working together to organize and implement an MBI driven behavior program;
- Corrective reading is creating readers;
- Student population increasing in electives;
- Students making steady, measurable progress;
- Kids are reading more, trying harder;
- Students blooming on *Cognitive Tutor*; and
- Newspaper printing Lodge Grass student achievers.

Although there was no early release for the month of December, on January 19th Marilyn Zimmerman from the Native Children's Trauma Center will be providing professional development to the entire Lodge Grass Public Schools staff.

New technology for the high school math staff has arrived: 4 ELMOs and 4 projectors. These will be in use in the classrooms soon.

The District Leadership Team (DLT) has been reconfigured to add high school core content teachers. These additions will allow for more cyclical communication between the District Leadership Team (DLT) and their constituents. The District Leadership Team meets on January 13th and 14th in Billings with other Schools of Promise to discuss progress, obstacles and successes. As the DLT moves forward committees will be formed to implement the District Action Plan.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

DLT January 13-14 in Billings

DLT January 17- 4:00-6:00 Boardroom

DLT February 1- 4:00-6:00 Boardroom

DLT February 15 - 4:00-6:00 Boardroom

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School Board Involvement --- Stevie Schmitz: The school board met at their regular meeting on December 14. Items requiring the board's action included the following:

- An update from SIG staff.
- Approval of the Assistant Principal job description.
- Board training discussion.
- Close-up trip for students.
- Mediation update.
- A mediator has been assigned to help the process of negotiations.
- The state mediator has proposed a bargaining date of December 30. The district is available, but the union is not so additional dates will be proposed in January.
- The negotiator presented the current offers and counter offers. The district is offering a 2% increase for all staff and the union is asking for 8% for certified staff and 10% for classified staff. Detailed information about the proposals and their financial impact are available for anyone to review.

Looking ahead, the board will work on the superintendent's evaluation in January based on the instrument that they chose at this meeting. In addition, the contract of the business manager position will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Community News --- Forest Horn:

Forest has taken ownership of his role as the Community Liaison in Lodge Grass. He identified the school schedules and times that he could become better engaged with the youth. He is working on bringing in Elders to tell the winter Crow stories in the mornings. Due to weather and other issues this has yet to happen. We are working on identifying honorariums for the Elders through the SIG program. He has brought in the Crow Health and Fitness team to assist with afterschool fitness programs. He is organizing a newsletter and developing a calendar of events. We presented to the Lodge Grass students for their pep rally and it went very well. They have great students out there that often feel belittled by staff and teachers. We have met with the Student Council and asked for their input and support on getting things moving. They are interested in developing a student lounge and will put forth the effort to help Forest. Forest is

working with the elementary incentive program and making efforts to duplicate it in the high school.

From the Helena Office -- Nancy Coleman, SIG Unit Director:

District Action Plan - (DAP) We are providing a template for writing the detailed action plans. We are also coordinating with the districts on the information required to write the ISAs (Intergovernmental Service Agreements) to expedite that process.

School of Promise Performance Appraisal System – (SOPPAS) The approved list of the people trained in SOPPAS has been given to the district. The Labor/Management team will meet and pick one or more of the listed providers to present for a contract to the board at the January meeting. The board needs to approve the contract for those services so their work can be completed by May 2011.

Overview of the Montana Behavior Initiative

(MBI): This is a system approach to establish the social culture and behavior supports needed for a school to be an effective learning environment for all students. Each school has an MBI team that works to establish and teach behavior expectations. This service is being provided for the district through on-site assistance from MBI consultants with support from the SIG OPI on-site staff.

When the MBI system is in place:

- Staff are more consistent in their expectations and actions;
- Students understand and are more likely to follow rules and expectations;
- A more positive relationship exists between and among staff and students; and
- The focus is on learning.

Grant Requirements for January and

February:

For the board's information we are providing a listing of things that need to be accomplished at various levels. Much of the work is a continuation from the previous month:

For the on-site OPI employees:

- Continue to provide planning for the implementation of the District Action Plan (DAP);
- Begin work with SIG District Leadership Team (DLT) to establish District Action Plans details;
- Continue to assist with organizing the collaborative Professional Learning Communities (PLCs);
- Continue to support actions steps within the Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI);
- Continue to schedule external professional development providers;
- Attend SIG meeting in Billings in January with all other SIG groups;
- Continue to provide job embedded professional development through training and coaching for all staff.

For the Principal:

- Continue to attend School Improvement Team meeting(s);
- Continue to attend and coordinate professional development of the PLCs;
- Continue to lead, along with the MBI facilitator, action steps within the MBI;
- Continue the participation with the SOPPAS (Schools of Promise Performance Assessment System) to provide support and feedback to teachers on effective instruction;
- Begin the work with SIG DLT to establish District Action Plans;
- Attend SIG meeting in Billings in January with all other SIG groups;
- Continue to monitor a system to determine 'at risk' students based on – attendance, past class grades, discipline, support systems for success (student information system); and
- Begin gathering the baseline data for last year 2009-2010 on several grant required 'indicators.'

For the District/Superintendent:

- Provide the board the name of the external evaluator that was selected by the labor/management team for board approval (teacher evaluations);

- Continue to support the implementation of the DAP through resources, etc.; and
- Continue to participate in the finance calls that are provided by the OPI once a month.

For teachers:

- Actively participate in collaborative PLCs;
- Continue to plan and implement lesson plans that include standards alignment with ongoing assessments;
- Continue to implement the programs for communication arts and mathematics with fidelity;
- Continue to actively participate in school improvement teams which you are involved with; and
- Begin the evaluation process with 3rd party evaluators.

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Statewide Youth and Community

Outreach – Donnie Wetzel: This was an excellent month for the Community Liaisons (CLs). They have developed some great relationships in the four key areas (Elders, Youth, Community, and Area organizations). They are being seen throughout the community and stepping in where needed to assist the SIG staff, teachers, youth and administrators. They took great initiative on setting things up during the break and volunteered their time, trucks, and also identified resources to assist with any events. Our main goal over the last few months was to be seen – face-to-face contact and helping where needed. I feel relationships and trust are being built with our CLs and the communities they live in. They are a key factor in the SIG because they are the voice of the people and the youth. It will take some time to show the community and youth that we are there to help them and support them in the schools, but the CLs are approaching the low hanging fruit and winning small battles that will eventually bring better support.

We will now start to bring in more structure to the CLs. They will be receiving the Solid Foundations training that lays out an organized approach for them. We will offer them PTA training. We will be developing a calendar at each location to lay out goals and objectives for the next three months. After-school programs will be implemented as well as mentorship programs with community members and the tribal colleges. We will be approaching the Tribal Councils and other important entities on the reservation to collaborate and build better relationships. It will definitely be an exciting new year!

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SIG Field Consultant News -- Courtney Peterson:

- Assisted Transformation and Instruction Leaders with District Action Planning
- Site visits to Pryor, Lodge Grass and a site visit to Frazer November 15-16
- Coordinated visits by consultants Frances Bessellieu and Ann Ganzert
- Begin standards setting, IEFA coordination, and pacing planning for McDougal-Litell
- Research upcoming areas of implementation

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School Advocate News – Sarah Pierce:

Wrapping up the year and semester means planning ahead for the future. I have several projects that I am currently working on to help student achievement. Currently I am researching summer school programs, credit recovery programs and ways to connect our students to AP and other rigorous courses across other Montana schools. I am also continuing to develop and align the goals that have been set forth by the Federal School Improvement Grant to goals that are already in place set by the state and the districts. I am also working on building communication between teachers across multiple districts. The SIG Web site should be up and running for public display soon. I am also working on building capacity at each

school site in best practices in planning for professional development with outside providers and through job-embedded approaches.

Teachers working toward National Board Certification through the Take One! program will have their first meeting together on January 15th at Dull Knife College.

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